AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph appearing on page 8, line 30 to page 9, line 5 with the following amended paragraph:

The cluster framework 14 appears as a single system to individual clients, which subscribe to the services published by each cluster. The client sessions receive notification of any changes in the services provided, such as described in U.S. Patent Application, Serial No. 10/086,949———————, entitled "System And Method For Providing Out-Of-Band Notification Of Service Changes," filed February 28, 2002, pending, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference, and transfer to alternate nodes as necessary.

Please replace the paragraph appearing on page 9, line 6 to page 9, line 18 with the following amended paragraph:

Within each cluster framework 14, each of the database servers 11 incorporate high availability components, such as described in J. Gray et al., "Transaction Processing: Concepts and Techniques," pp. 128-38, M. Kaufmann Pubs., San Francisco, California (1993), the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference. Failover processing is initiated upon the detection of the termination or unscheduled stoppage ("hanging") of a database instance or system component, such as described in U.S. Patent Application, Serial No. 10/087,494———————, entitled "System And Method For Detecting Termination Of An Application Instance Using Locks," filed February 28, 2002, pending, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference. Likewise, upon a planned shutdown, an application will switch over to another instance of the database supporting the service. Other situations in which failover processing is required are possible, as would be recognized by one skilled in the art.

Please replace the paragraph appearing on page 9, line 19 to page 9, line 26 with the following amended paragraph:

The response times provided by the substitute database servers 12 in a standby node may be longer than prior to failover or switchover until the ramp-up period for populating the database instance caches has run, although the ramp-up period can be substantially minimized by pre-connecting to the standby node and warming the database instance caches beforehand, such as described in U.S. Patent Application, Serial No. 10/086,842————————, entitled "System And Method For Pre-Compiling A Source Cursor Into A Target Library Cache," filed February 28, 2002, pending, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference.

Please replace paragraph appearing on page 14, line 6 to line 15 with the following amended paragraph:

Each cooperative resource group 32 executes on a preferred node (block 81). Failures or planned outages are detected (block 82), such as described in related U.S. patent application, Serial No. 10/087,494————————, "System And Method For Detecting Termination Of An Application Instance Using Locks," filed February 28, 2002, pending, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference. Execution continues (block 86), while the node remains available (block 83). Otherwise, if the node is unavailable due to a failure or outage (block 83), the failed or down node is shutdown with the IP address set in an off-line status (block 84). In parallel, the service is restarted on a surviving node (block 85), off the critical path of the shutdown node. The routine then ends.